Examining the Leadership Behaviors of Primary School Principals: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract
This study aims to examine the beliefs and experiences of primary school principals regarding leadership behaviors. In this context, the research was structured in a phenomenological design by employing a qualitative approach. Seven primary school principals were the study's participants, chosen using the criterion sampling method. A semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers were used as data collection tools. The research data were collected through face-to-face interviews with the participants and also recorded. The research data were analyzed with both content analysis and descriptive analysis techniques. In the study, it was found that school principals demonstrated a range of leadership behaviors within the meaning of the concept of those behaviors, the process of developing a strategic plan and vision, the process of making decisions at the school, the school environment, the impact on teachers' professional development studies, parent and relations with the external environment, and the efforts to improve student success. The findings of the research are broken down and analyzed with reference to the corresponding literature. Various recommendations were presented in accordance with the research findings.
Keywords: Primary school, school principal, leadership behavior, phenomenology.

Introduction

The role of the school principal is one of leadership in educational institutions, and as such, the school principal is tasked with a variety of responsibilities, including working effectively with individuals, providing professional assistance to the school, preparing the school and its environment for instructional activities, and establishing educational programs (Aydın, 2000). One of the fields of study that places a significant emphasis on educational administration is leadership (Şişman, 2014). Since leadership first made its way into the realm of educational administration, it has been the subject of research into many different aspects. For example, in several studies, its relationship with organizational factors such as job performance (Kuoppala, Lamminpaa, Liira, and Vainio, 2008), job satisfaction (Stander and Rothmann, 2008; Taş and Önder 2010; Yılmaz and Boğa Ceylan, 2011), commitment (Ding, Lu, Song, and Lu, 2012; Soba, Akman, and Eroğlu, 2018), culture (Arif, Zainudin, and Hamid, 2019; Çelikten, 2006), climate (Allen, Grigsby, and Peters, 2015; Erdoğdu and Umurkan, 2014; Griffith, 1999), and trust (Ertürk, 2019; Joseph and Winston, 2004; Terzi, Gocen and Kaya, 2020) was investigated.

In addition to these research domains, studies on the relationship between school leadership and student success occupy a significant position in the relevant literature. The duties and responsibilities of the school principal are stated as setting goals, raising skill expectations, establishing strategies, offering a positive and supportive climate, offering resources, creating a safe and organized environment, ensuring the professional development of teachers, overseeing teaching, and monitoring student progress in the studies looking for answers to the inquiry of the roles and responsibilities of the school principal in increasing student success (Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides, 1990; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Özdemir & Kavak, 2020). Additionally, it is stressed that the principal of the school should prioritize equality, forge positive relationships with his or her coworkers, be steady and consistent, understanding and empathic, act as a mentor, be open to changes, generate suggestions and solutions, be sensitive to issues, and know how to act toward the student and the teacher (Babaoğlan, Nalbant, & Çelik, 2017). These expectations demonstrate the need for the school principal to possess both strong interpersonal and technical skills. Examining the literature, it is emphasized that school principals should possess the necessary technical, conceptual, and humanistic competencies. Even though the

literature agrees on these three dimensions, some studies suggest that school principals should have new competence areas that are adaptable to changing circumstances (eg. Şahin, 2000). Uslu (2013) came to the conclusion that school principals should enhance their management philosophy, communication, and management processes.

Examining the research on school administration reveals that school principals are expected to do more than perform routine and bureaucratic tasks. In the literature, the primary leadership behaviors of school principals have been identified as achieving the predetermined school objectives, improving teachers and families for student success, and enhancing the school's effectiveness (Bursalıoğlu, 2000; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Şişman, 2014). Similar to this, leading students and teachers, developing the school's mission and vision, establishing the school's culture and setting, and maintaining school-parent collaboration are all anticipated leadership behaviors of the school principal (Bilge, 2013). According to Akbaba Altun and Çakan (2008), successful schools should have characteristics such as cooperation, support for education in the school, the quality of teachers, improving the physical infrastructure of the school, and the utilization of technology in the school; and it is the responsibility of the school principal to turn these characteristics a reality in the school. In summary, there is an emphasis placed on a variety of leadership behaviors of school principals, including concentrating on the success of students, developing a school culture that is success-oriented, guiding teachers, and providing effective communication with the school environment. In order to exhibit these leadership behaviors, it is important that they have 21st-century skills. In this respect, 21st-century skills are grouped under three main themes: (*i*) learning and innovation skills, (*ii*) information, media, and technology literacy skills, and (*iii*) life and career skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008). Today's school principals need to have a variety of skills in order to effectively regulate the learning processes that take place in schools and to lead the education of their students. These skills include being open to learning, creating effective communication and cooperation, being entrepreneurial, taking responsibility, having access to information as well as the ability to effectively use information technology.

Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the extent to which the leadership behaviors of school principals are related to the level of academic success achieved by students. These studies suggest that there are direct or indirect effects between the school principal's leadership behaviors and student success. According to Ozdemir and Kavak (2020), there is a complex relationship between the leadership of the school principal and the success of the students, and the effect that the leadership has on the student's success is small yet significant. In spite of the fact that it has been underlined that the difference is small but significant, it is apparent that school administrators have a vital role in minimizing the disparities in academic achievement that exist across schools (Babaoğlan et al., 2017). Research looking into student academic failures found issues with the family's lack of interest in education, the child's lack of motivation, the quality of the teacher, and the school surroundings (Akbaba Altun, 2009). In a related study, Özata Yücel and Özkan (2011) found that the problems caused by the teacher, the student, and the family were what ultimately led to the lack of student success, and these problems included the school's lack of infrastructure, the teacher's and the student's lack of motivation, and the family's lack of interest at the foundation. The effect of the school principal on student achievement is inescapable in terms of how they influence the factors that show up in the studies. Although it appears that the effect of the school principal on such variables will be indirect, it is believed that the effect will be greater when other factors are considered. Leithwood and Mascall (2008)

emphasized that the principal's involvement with all school stakeholders in education through cooperation and teamwork has a significant effect on student success.

The quality of the teacher is another factor influencing student success and is among the responsibilities of the school principal (Babaoğlan et al., 2017). A Principal's level of effectiveness affects teacher performance and, consequently, the success of students (Darling Hammond, 2000; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Success is enhanced by teachers who are communicating with their students, consistently motivate students, and guide students (Akkurt & Karabağ Köse, 2019). In addition, teacher education should be prioritized in order to narrow the success gaps between schools (Önder & Güçlü, 2014). In both national and international reports, teacher education is identified as an aspect of policies executed to increase student success and reduce success gaps between institutions due to the quality of teachers (European Trade Union Committee for Education [ETUCE], 2008; TEDMEM, 2019). Evidently, the importance of teacher quality has been emphasized in numerous sources and reports, and this responsibility is enumerated among those of the school principal (Karip, 2018). Balyer (2013) found that school principals' conversations with teachers regarding educational issues, their feedback and appreciation, their function as role models for teachers, their encouragement of teachers' professional development, their emphasis on teaching and learning, and their support of relationships and collaboration among teachers had a positive impact on student success.

Another crucial leadership behavior of school principals is that they foster a cooperative school culture. Therefore, building school culture is one of the primary responsibilities of school principals (Babaoğlan et al., 2017; Özdemir, 2006). Şahin Frat (2010) emphasizes the importance of developing a robust organizational culture to clarify what is right and wrong in situations where formal regulations are inadequate. After meticulously organizing present traditions, objectives, and ceremonies, school principals work alongside teachers to develop a shared and collaborative vision that ensures the school's success (Çelikten, 2006). The cultures of schools ought to be situated within the framework of trust, respect, cooperation, and the sharing of similar aims and values; and they can be made possible via the communication of the school principal and the cooperation of teachers (Aslan, Özer, & Ağıroğlu Bakır, 2009). Numerous research has been done looking at the relationship between student success and school culture, and significant correlations between school culture and student success have been proven. (Ayık & Ada, 2009; Çimen & Karadağ, 2019; Karadağ, Kılıçoğlu, & Yılmaz, 2014).

Among the duties and responsibilities of the school principal is the creation of a learning environment that is open to communication and collaboration. Openness to communication, teamwork, and the creation of educational applications are signs that a school is a professional learning community, and student success is the primary objective in these institutions (DuFour, 2003; Talbert, 2010). According to Hord and Sommers (2008), the principal of the school should prioritize teacher and student development and foster a collaborative environment. Student success in school increases and a development-based education process develops when the school principal successfully performs these responsibilities (Lynch, Smith, Provost, & Madden, 2016; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). Student success will increase when shared leadership, collective and collaborative learning, and shared value and vision, which are the dimensions of being a professional learning community are created by the school principal (Dufour & Eaker, 1998; Hughes & Kritsonis, 2007). As a result, the fact that the school is a professional learning community increases the quality of teachers and student success (Ratts et al., 2015). This context suggests that the school principal's direct impact on teacher quality by encouraging

collaboration and communication also indirectly contributes to increased student success. Likewise, Özdemir, Gün, and Yirmibeş (2021), it was determined that school principals play a significant part in boosting student success by enhancing the organizational and family-related paths that teachers work within. In the end, the key concepts for developing an efficient school and enhancing student success are the leadership characteristics and behaviors of the school principal (Gümüş, Bellibaş, Şen, & Hallinger, 2021; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hou, Cui, & Zhang, 2019; Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, & Brown, 2014). This study's main objective is to look at the leadership behaviors of school principals who work in primary schools since they have a direct and indirect impact on student success. The purpose of this study is to investigate the leadership behaviors of school principals (Kars and İnandı, 2018; Lindahl, 2010; Tahaoğlu and Gedikoğlu, 2009), which are predominantly examined based on teacher opinions, according to the school principals' opinions and views. According to school principals, understanding the nature and extent of leadership behaviors can help them understand how each principal personally perceives their roles, responsibilities, and duties inside the school. Through this study, it will also be possible to learn more about the leadership behaviors that primary school principals emphasize and the areas in which they define such qualities. In light of this information, the major objective of the study is to elicit the perspectives and first-hand accounts of principals who currently work in primary schools on leadership behaviors.

Method

Research Model

The main purpose of this study is to shed light on the beliefs and experiences of primary school principals regarding leadership behaviors. This study is qualitative research based on the phenomenological research design. According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), phenomenological studies allow for the understanding and disclosure of a person's or people's feelings, thoughts, and experiences toward phenomena. The phenomenological method was used in this situation to bring out the opinions, perceptions, and experiences of school principals on the leadership behaviors they employ.

Participants

In this study, the participants were determined according to the purposeful sampling method. Purposeful sampling provides access to abundant information sources pertinent to the research's objectives. When it is intended to work with individuals or situations that meet specific criteria or traits, this method of sampling is chosen (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2020). The criterion sampling method, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used. Being a school principal for at least 5 years in primary schools was determined as a criterion. The primary objective of determining this criterion is to identify participants who exhibit managerial qualities and who are able to gain managerial experience in primary schools. The participants of the study consisted of seven school principals working in primary schools in Ankara (Table 1). Each participant was assigned a name code to facilitate the presentation of the findings and protect their confidentiality. According to the announcement made by the General Directorate of Population and Citizenship Affairs in Turkey as of the year 2020, these name codes were chosen as one of the most common names used in the country. Information about the participants can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. *Information about the participants*

Participant Name Code	Education Level	Gender	Seniority in School Administration (years)	Educational Status
Mehmet	Primary School	Male	37	Bachelor's degree
Mustafa	Primary School	Male	27	Bachelor's degree
Ahmet	Primary School	Male	20	Bachelor's degree
Ali	Primary School	Male	15	Postgraduate degree
Hüseyin	Primary School	Male	8	Bachelor's degree
Hasan	Primary School	Male	7	Bachelor's degree
İbrahim	Primary School	Male	6	Bachelor's degree

All of the participants in the study work as school principals in primary schools. In addition, all participants were male (n = 7). The seniority of the school principals ranged from 6 to 37 years. Finally, all of the participants have undergraduate degrees except for a school principal who has a postgraduate education.

Data Collection

For the purpose of data collection, a semi-structured interview form was utilized. This form was devised by the researchers, and it consisted of open-ended questions that were enriched by probes. The interview form was developed after going through various stages. First, a list of 10 questions based on the literature and the research problems was developed. Then, a field expert and a Turkish language expert assisted in examining these questions. Initially, the expert in the field suggested adding an interview question about relationships with the external environment and undertaking deeper literature reviews. The literature study was enlarged by the researchers in the subject matter, and researchers looked at several publications from domestic as well as international sources. As a direct consequence of these readings, an additional interview question on relations with the external environment was included, some interview questions were eliminated, and some interview questions were modified. The Turkish language specialist then looked over the interview questions for grammar, expression, and spelling. The specialist in the Turkish language indicated that the interview questions were understandable in general and recommended some minor spelling fixes. On the basis of the specialists' opinions and suggestions, necessary revisions were made to the interview form. Accordingly, the interview form consisted of seven open-ended questions. Some sample interview questions are presented below:

- Can you explain how the decision-making processes in your school work?

- What kinds of practices do you put into place at your school to boost the student's academic success?

- Are there any practices that are unique to your school? Can you give an example?

The research data were collected in the form of face-to-face interviews with the participants. In this direction, firstly, a phone interview was held with the determined school principals. In these interviews, information was provided about the purpose, scope, and content of the research and an appointment was also requested. By expressing their support for the research, school principals scheduled an interview. The interviews were held at the relevant school on the specified date and time. The first researcher conducted interviews with the school principals. With the permission of the participants, a voice recorder was used in all interviews. The interviews with the school principals lasted around 50 minutes, and they were all conducted over a week.

Data Analysis

The voice-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim before the research data were analyzed. These transcripts have been added to a folder in the computer environment. The reading and analysis of the data began after that. The research data were read in detail by the researchers. The research data were analyzed with both content analysis and descriptive analysis techniques. In the research, the data were initially analyzed inductively with the content analysis method. According to Patton (2014), with the inductive approach, the researcher's interaction with the data generates the findings. In this manner, the researchers read the interview transcripts of each participant to generate numerous codes from the data. At the end of this coding process, the first code list was created. Secondly, a deductive approach has been adopted in data analysis. In this regard, the compatibility of the codes with the literature was investigated. After this procedure, the codes' compliance with the literature was confirmed, and they were integrated into several themes in line with the literature.

Validity and Reliability

To guarantee the validity and trustworthiness of the research process, a variety of methodologies have been employed. First, the research process is thoroughly planned. Within this plan, a systematic approach was taken to prepare the interview form, arrange the form according to the opinions of experts, and collect and analyze the data. Secondly, a detailed description strategy was applied. In this situation, every attempt was made to accurately portray the participant's opinions in the findings. In addition, the expert examination was utilized as a strategy. Expert review is the study of research in its numerous facets by individuals with broad research knowledge and expertise in qualitative research methods (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). An expert in Education Management and qualitative research methods was requested to review the article as part of the research. The expert in the field stated that the article generally adheres to academic writing standards and provided many suggestions for the methods section. The researchers made the necessary adjustments in accordance with the expert opinion. In order to uncover the participants' genuine opinions on the research topic, probing questions were utilized. In this regard, different types of probe questions were employed in the research in an effort to elicit the participants' genuine opinions on the topic.

Ethical Permits of Research

Throughout this analysis, all guidelines specified to be applied within the scope of the "Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive for Higher Education Institutions" were implemented. None of the actions that were stated under the title "Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", which is the second part of the directive, were performed during the study.

Ethics Committee Permission Information:

Name of the committee that made the ethical evaluation = Gazi University Ethics Commission

Date of ethical review decision=20.04.2021

Ethics assessment document issue number=2021-487

Findings

Opinions on the Meaning of Leadership Behaviors

"What comes to mind when we say Leadership behaviors in school and How would you define this concept?" was the first question asked to the participants. The interviews provided several codes that were used to answer this question, which looks at what the concept of "leadership behaviors" entails (Table 2).

Table 2. *Primary school principals' opinions on the meaning of the concept of "leadership behaviors"*

Theme	Code	f
Meaning of the concept of leadership behaviors	Focusing on teaching	4
	Communicating effectively-developing relationships	3
	Securing justice	2
	Providing a visionary perspective	2
	Taking on responsibility and taking action	2
	Being well-equipped and having an accumulation of knowledge	1
	Sparking enthusiasm and excitement	1
	Facilitating Coordination	1
	Behaving in a consistent and determinant way	1
	Problem Solving	1
	Interview system	1

In the research, the concept of "leadership behaviors" has numerous connotations in the minds of primary school principals. Focusing on teaching and effective communication have been at the vanguard of these associations. Principal Mehmet stated that he puts teaching at the center of leadership behavior and emphasized that "*they strive to make a difference between the day a student first shows up and the point reached at the end through offering behavioral change for improvement in students according to requirements by the primary school education level*". Additionally, school principals have addressed issues of effectively employing communication tactics, cooperating, fostering great employee relations, and fostering a positive educational atmosphere. In addition, school principals have defined leadership behaviors in terms of securing justice, providing a visionary perspective, taking on responsibility, and taking action. The views of a school principal on securing justice and taking responsibility are as follows (Hasan):

> *Leadership in school for me is the ability to briefly undertake responsibility and to secure justice. The foundation of leadership behavior is the capacity to accept responsibility for all actions and to uphold justice in order to create a peaceful working atmosphere for all school employees. The individual becomes a natural leader when they take every step to maintain an equal distance from all school employees and to facilitate justice. The two main pillars of leadership behavior will be established on a firm foundation if every responsibility can be acknowledged in the duties and operations, in addition to being a trustworthy principal who ensures justice.*

Besides these opinions, some school principals stated that school leaders should be well-equipped and possess an accumulation of knowledge regarding leadership behaviors, spark employees' enthusiasm and excitement, ensure coordination in work and operations, and display consistent and determined behaviors. A school principal (Ahmet) stated that problem-solving by proposing rational and conciliatory solutions is an essential leadership behavior. Ali concluded by saying that, in contrast to these opinions, it makes not much sense to discuss leadership behaviors in a setting where school

administrators are chosen through an interview system. Moreover, he highlighted that the education system has a command structure. It is extremely difficult for a leader to emerge from an education system where this culture predominates due to the fact they must follow orders from the top down and do what is required.

Opinions on the Strategic Plan and Vision Determination Process

The second question posed to the participants was "What is your approach when determining the strategic plan and school vision in the school? How do you approach when making associations for practices in school?". As a consequence of the interviews, a variety of codes were developed for the scope of this question (Table 3).

Table 3. *Opinions of primary school principals on the strategic plan and vision determination process*

Theme	Code	f
	Fostering a participatory and democratic environment	6
	Sharing the vision	5
Strategic plan and vision	Analyzing the needs and current situation	3
determination process	Putting the student at the forefront	2
	Setting achievable goals	2
	Conducting preliminary work with the core staff	2

In the study, primary school principals' viewpoints on the strategic plan and vision determination process were sought. As the focal point of these processes, school principals agreed to provide a participatory and democratic environment. In this perspective, almost all of the school principals reported that in addition to the process of determining the strategic plan and vision for the school, participation in the school's decision-making procedures on many problems was encouraged for teachers and all other stakeholders. *It is our major objective to make our school a democratic practice area by taking the opinions of every one of our stakeholders in every application we do based on collaboration*, Hasan said, underscoring the fact that they have embraced a democratic understanding. In addition to this finding, the majority of school principals stressed that the vision-sharing process is a crucial step. In this context, Mehmet stressed the value of working together before noting that several meetings and events are organized throughout the year to communicate the school's vision and mission to its stakeholders. Nevertheless, a number of school principals emphasized the significance of analyzing the needs and current situation when developing strategic plans and visions. Ali gave the following example regarding this matter:

> *For instance, after switching to the "4+4+4 Education System," we exchanged students with secondary schools after evaluating the school's current situation. We exchanged students, but the students who came to us were far below expectations. We tried to analyze why this happened. As a consequence of our analyses, we determined that approximately 70 private schools in the area had a substantial impact on the parents. With the assistance of the government, families began to favor private schools. This was both an advantage and a disadvantage for us. We began to comprehend the situation and determine the required strategies accordingly.*

Under this theme, school principals also advocate putting the student at the forefront, establishing achievable goals, working with the core staff, and determining the most effective strategies. Therefore, certain school principals stated that they centered their strategic planning efforts on the student and sought to set achievable goals. Additionally, a school administrator (Ali) claimed that he

often conducted preliminary discussions on developing the mission and vision with his core team and then interviewed the teachers.

Opinions on Decision-Making Processes at School

The third question posed to participants was "How do you make decisions in your school? What kind of path do you follow when making decisions? How do your employees affect the decision-making processes? Can you give examples of the practices?". As a consequence of the interviews, a variety of codes were developed for the scope of this question (Table 4).

Table 4. *Opinions of primary school principals on the decision-making processes at school*

Theme	Code	f
The decision-making process at school	Participatory decision making	5
	Expressing ideas freely - exchanging opinions	3
	Consulting with relevant individuals	1
	Purposeful decision making	1
	Taking regulations into consideration	1
	Conducting preliminary work with the core staff	1

In the research, questions on the decision-making procedures at the school were posed to primary school principals. Principals of schools reported that they implement participatory decision-making processes in a pluralistic, democratic environment. School administrators said that they reached a conclusion with the input of the teachers (Mehmet), that the teachers participated in the decision-making process by voting when the process is mature enough (Mustafa), and they guaranteed the applicability of the decision by involving teachers in the process (Brahim). Hasan explained his views on this matter as follows:

> *Our decisions are made in a pluralistic way. To illustrate, there are four entrances to our two school buildings in the school garden. We initially talked with the deputy principals about the best times to enter and leave the school and how to do it in accordance with the social distancing rules during the pandemic. We asked that the group presidents meet with our teachers to discuss their ideas with us. We also spoke about the circumstance with the other staff members and security personnel at our school. In order to divide students into two separate groups before beginning education, the majority of respondents suggested beginning the day by having students in the first and second grades enter the building through the front entrance at 9:00 and those in the third and fourth grades enter through the back entrance at 9:20. At the point of leaving, we came to the conclusion that we could fix the issue if we steered each of the four groups toward one of the building's four different departure doors. During the course of our discussion on these issues, we also consulted with the ideas and opinions of our parents via the parent-teacher association. We have incorporated all of our stakeholders that are interested in the issue in this way. Overall, everyone was pleased with the decision.*

The issues of freedom of speech and the exchange of ideas are also highlighted in relation to this theme. Some school principals said that they make an effort to foster an atmosphere that encourages teachers to voice their opinions without restraint. In this context, they stressed that employees have the chance to express their thoughts and ideas in a comfortable environment. In addition to these outcomes, Hasan said that he only shared information with those who would be interested in the situation if a choice was to be made for specific situations. Huseyin, on the other hand, emphasized that decisions are

based on the school's goals for education. Last but not least, Ali used the following phrases to describe his decision-making and preliminary work with the core staff:

> *We first go over the choices to be made and the objectives to be established in a core staff made up of "Me, School Counselor, and Deputy School Principal." After deciding as a team, we share our decisions with the teachers. We ask for their opinions and suggestions. We will now begin implementing our activities in their finalized state.*

Opinions on the School Environment

The fourth query posed to the participants was, "How would you describe the school's overall working environment?" What steps are you taking to foster a positive atmosphere for learning for your employees and students?". As a consequence of the interviews, a variety of codes were developed for the scope of this question (Table 5).

Table 5. *Opinions of primary school principals about the school environment*

Theme	Code	f
School environment	Creating and maintaining a strong culture of collaboration	4
	Developing values and rituals that are unique to the school	2
	Creating a positive and supportive school environment	2
	Organizing projects and events	1

In the course of the study, primary school principals' opinions on the school environment were solicited. Accordingly, the majority of school principals stated that they strive to create and maintain a strong cooperation culture. Ali put forward the following in this regard:

> *Our school is a "Boutique School". We have a positive working climate. Communication and cooperation between teachers is quite good. As the school administration, we strive to maintain and develop this atmosphere. A positive school environment also reflects professional cooperation.*

Mustafa made a similar observation and stressed the significance of cultivating and maintaining cooperation among teachers. Additionally, he added that this cooperative setting promotes teachers' professional development. On the other hand, a number of school principals have addressed the matter of establishing rituals and values that are unique to their own schools. Mustafa said, "*There are traditional ceremonies and rituals specific to our school. The observance of the rules is regarded as a significant value at our school.* " İbrahim stressed that every school has a distinct identity and noted that all of the practices carried out in the school are impacted by the elements On the other side, a number of school principals underlined that they work hard to cultivate a positive and supportive atmosphere within their schools. According to Hüseyin, who views the school as a living space, the presence of teachers who are well-equipped, possess a high level of intellectual profundity, have grown in their capacity to take on responsibility, are productive in their social lives, and are open to change and development is crucial for improving the quality of education and teaching. In this respect, he emphasized that teachers have a supportive approach. Last but not least, Hasan said that through Ministry programs, European Union projects, and other school-specific activities and projects, they are attempting to establish a positive educational environment that emphasizes learning:

> *Our primary objective is to facilitate mobility beyond the Three Continents Three Sisters School Project, EU Erasmus KA101, KA102, and E-Twinning, as well as traditional sister*

school programs. In addition to students and teachers, our goal is to assure the mobility of parents after the COVID-19 pandemic. We would want to plan a fair with our international students and parents (who are mostly immigrants) where they may express their own culture whenthe COVID-19 pandemic ends. We are the practice school of MoNE TVP (Turkish Vocabulary Preservation Project). We are contributing to the project as the district coordinator. In addition to this, we actively take part in EU programs that are open to all schools.

Opinions on the Effect of School Principals on the Professional Development of Teachers

"What are your views on the professional development of teachers?" was the sixth question posed to the participants. What do you do, or how do you do it?". As a consequence of the interviews, a variety of codes were developed for the scope of this question (Table 6).

Table 6. *Opinions regarding the effect of primary school principals on the teachers' professional development*

Theme	Code	f
Effect on teachers' professional development	Encouraging postgraduate education	2
	Organizing seminars	2
	Being a role model	2
	Establishing academic cooperation with universities	1
	Supporting the teacher	1
	Promoting and encouraging in-service activities	1
	Encouraging them to work fairly	1

In the study, primary school principals were asked for their opinions on their effects on teachers' professional development. School principals have put forward various opinions on this matter. In this situation, becoming a role model, conducting seminars, and promoting postgraduate study were seen to be key. Ahmet mentioned that he supports and advises teachers to take part in postgraduate studies in this regard. Likewise, Ali mentioned that "*The professional development of our teachers is quite crucial. For this reason, we encourage their participation in various seminars or postgraduate study and try to make these opportunities possible.*" The following are the phrases he used to describe how he attempted to lead seminars for the professional growth of teachers at the school:

…For instance, we invited Professor… from Ankara University to offer seminars by coordinating with multiple schools during the seminar session at the beginning of the year. We try to do this every year.

Hasan also noted that the ministry's in-service training programs are insufficient and stressed that they are working to address this shortcoming by developing academic partnerships and collaboration with universities. He claimed that universities gave them the support they needed, particularly with regard to matters that teachers requested or thought were lacking. In addition to these opinions, he said that school administration tries to be role models in order to motivate teachers to work and develop themselves by using the following words: "*… working hard and being open to progress is our main principle. Teachers who observe the administration's determination and dedication conform to the administration without further motivation.*" In favor of these views, Ibrahim stated that education is a process of lifelong learning and that teachers always assist them in the process of adapting themselves to new things.

Another school principal (Huseyin) expressed the in-service training opportunities available or planned for each field and stated that he demonstrated to teachers the benefits of these activities. Hasan stated that working fairly as a school principal contributed significantly to the job performance of teachers. In this context, he asserted that acting fairly encourages teachers to work professionally and, consequently, improves their performance.

Opinions on Relationships with Parents and the Surroundings

The sixth question posed to the participants was "How do you manage your relationships with the school's external environment? How is your relationship with your parents? What policies do you follow in your relationships? Do you make use of external opportunities to improve school conditions? Do you work with non-governmental organizations, associations, etc.?". As a consequence of the interviews, a variety of codes were developed for the scope of this question (Table 7).

Table 7. *Opinions of primary school principals on their relationship with parents and the environment*

Theme	Code	f
Relations with parents and the environment	Communicating effectively with parents and the environment	5
	Utilizing external opportunities to improve school conditions	5
	Teacher-parent relationships for student development	1
	The disadvantage of establishing a relationship with non-governmental organizations	1
	Dissatisfied parents (Unnecessary complaints)	1

Principals of primary schools were surveyed regarding their relationships with parents and the environment. The majority of school principals stated that they attach importance to relations with parents and the environment and that they try to improve these relations. In this context, school principals highlighted their desire to preserve a positive relationship with parents, nonprofit organizations and public agencies. Ali highlighted the significance of preserving a positive relationship with them in this regard in order to gain parental support in primary school. He then shared the following views:

> *In our role as the school administration, we focus largely on listening to and comprehending the concerns of the parents. Parents who feel appreciated and heard are more likely to work together to solve problems. In relations with parents, we prefer to be "open, transparent, and clear" for this reason.*

Principal Mustafa stated that he employed an empathic approach in his interactions with parents, whereas Principal Hüseyin stated that they recognized their shortcomings and increased their sense of unity by conducting regular parent meetings. Utilizing external opportunities to enhance school conditions can be represented as another significant element stressed within the context of this subject. According to school principals, they used opportunities from outside sources to meet some of the school's equipment or restoration requirements. Hasan stated in this context that they contributed to the school, particularly through non-governmental organizations with the following words:

> *In order to improve school conditions, we establish relations with external sources. We do not hesitate to cooperate with NGOs for possible useful activities. I am also the president of an international non-governmental organization. As someone who believes that civic organizations are beneficial to education, all NGOs are welcome at our school.*

Ali stated that he received substantial support from parents in his efforts to improve school conditions. He then expressed the following opinions.: *"… one of our parents covered the costs of the"* Disabled Ramp *"for our disabled students. We keep in touch with our parents about a variety of different topics and make sure they support the school."* Additionally, he said that because they are primary schools, parent-teacher relationships are more crucial and fundamental for students' development:

> *Our school is a primary school, thus parents usually speak to classroom teachers. Parents who have good relations and don't have issues with their teachers are less likely to apply to the school administration. In this respect, we are very lucky as a school. We have excellent primary school teachers. When a parent is pleased with the classroom teacher, he or she does not often want to visit the school principal and may not even be familiar with the person.*

Finally, several school principals highlighted certain unfavorable circumstances related to this issue. Mehmet provided the following justification for why he didn't develop relationships with non-governmental organizations: "I do not *establish relations with non-governmental organizations. Because they may then attempt to control the process to suit their own wishes. We do what the regulation requires.*" Hasan, another school principal, also brought up the topic of dissatisfied parents by addressing the pointless complaints and demands of parents of primary school children:

> *…The largest barrier to fostering a positive school climate is unnecessary complaints and demands from parents, particularly in primary schools. Cooperating with perpetually dissatisfied parents who do not participate in parent training and do not attend enough of the events we invite is becoming increasingly difficult. Despite this, we engage in activities designed to reach parents and redirect their energies.*

Opinions on Efforts to Increase Student Success

The final query posed to the participants was, "What practices do you employ to improve the academic success of your students? Are there any practices that are unique to your school? Can you give an example?" As a consequence of the interviews, a variety of codes were developed for the scope of this question (Table 8).

Table 8. *Opinions of primary school principals on their efforts to increase student success at school*

Theme	Code	f
Efforts to increase student success	Providing a positive learning environment	2
	Study times, practice tests	2
	Effective guiding system	2
	Monitoring and evaluation	2
	Rewarding success	1
	Support to improving teaching	1

In the study, primary school principals were asked for their opinions on their efforts to increase student success at school. School principals have put forward various opinions on this matter. Some school principals stated that they strive to create a positive, motivating learning environment in order to increase student success. Though some school principals said that tests were applied to students who are below their peers' level in order to gauge their performance and develop strategies to improve it. Along with these findings, some school principals reported that they made a variety of guidance efforts

based on the abilities of the students; thus, counseling services were offered. Regarding this finding, Hasan shared the following views:

> *We provide support to gifted individuals by directing them to different institutions other than Counseling and Research Center. Our counseling service actively monitors the BILSEM [Science and Art Center] exams and generates statistics on a regular basis. We urge students who are considered suited to participate in our support training.*

Monitoring and evaluating student success is an additional conclusion arrived within the scope of this topic. According to Ali, they regularly assess student achievement with the following detailed evaluations:

> *… we discuss the results of the practice exams separately with each class group. I advise teachers to identify students who struggle academically and who have learning difficulties and to choose the best course of action for them. On the other hand, we don't want to use these exams to rank students' performance or promote competition. Because of this, students are not given information about things like their ranking. We are discussing the ups and downs in their scores. We are against the competitive education system that ranks students.*

In addition to these results, the school's principal (Mustafa) underlined that they honor them and present them with many awards in recognition of their academic and athletic accomplishments. In conclusion, a principal of a school remarked that the school is committed to supporting the expansion and dissemination of resources, as well as the enrichment of teaching methods and approaches, by contributing to the development of teaching.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to discover the perspectives and experiences of school principals working in primary schools on leadership behaviors. In order to accomplish this goal, a phenomenological research design was employed and interviews were carried out with seven different school principals. As a result of the data analysis, the main findings were reached in the form of (*i*) the meaning of the leadership behaviors concept, (*ii*) the strategic plan and vision determination process, (*iii*) the decision-making process at school, (*iv*) the school environment, (*v*) the impact on teachers' professional development, (*vi*) parent and relations with the external environment, and (*vii*) efforts to improve student success.

Principals of primary schools have assigned a variety of meanings to the concept of leadership behaviors. Notable is the fact that the majority of participants assigned positive connotations to school leadership behaviors. Among them, the importance of teaching effective communication is reiterated. In this context, leadership behaviors such as prioritization of teaching activities, focusing on student learning, dedication to learning and effective communication, working in harmony, and fostering positive relationships with employees are discussed. The findings of the study are generally compatible with the literature. Day and Leithwood (2007) identified a focus on teaching and open communication as defining characteristics of successful school principals. According to Alig Mielcarek (2003), school principals may help students succeed by modeling instructional leadership behaviors and applying academic pressure (emphasis on teaching). Similar to the findings of the research, Demirtaş and Özer (2014) defined school principals as persons who have good communication with the teachers, students,

parents, and environment. On the other hand, school principals described leadership behaviors within the scope of the study as ensuring justice, providing a visionary perspective, assuming responsibility, and taking action. Mulford (2007) came to the conclusion in support of this finding, that successful school principals possess values such as equality and social justice. Justice and honesty are also two of the most crucial qualities of ethical school principals, according to Brown and Trevio (2006). Within the scope of the research, meanings such as being well-equipped and possessing an accumulation of knowledge in terms of leadership behaviors, sparking enthusiasm and excitement in employees, ensuring coordination in work and operations, displaying consistent and determined behaviors, and problem solving were also reached. Babaoglan et al. (2017) similarly underlined in their research that school principals should place a high value on equity and justice, build positive relationships with teachers, be consistent and determined, take responsibility, and be understanding and empathic. In relation to this issue, a participant said that discussing leadership behaviors in a setting where school administrators were chosen via an interview process did not make much sense. In support of this conclusion, Arabacı, Akıllı, and Erol (2015) observed that the subjective nature of the school principal interview process generates sentiments of doubt and insecurity in candidates. In this study, a school principal also had this concern.

The research came to the conclusion that primary school principals fostered a democratic and participative environment while formulating strategic plans and visions. The school principal's involvement in determining the direction of the school was highlighted by Hallinger and Heck (1998), who collated the impacts of school leadership and used the school's vision, mission, and objectives as a key domain in their research. In a similar vein, Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) evaluated guidance and the development and implementation of school development plan through strategic planning as essential leadership practices. In addition, topics such as "determining school vision and mission in a democratic environment" and "taking part of teachers in decision-making" rose to the forefront at the school level as a result of this study's examination of the evidence on how successful leadership impacts student success. Corresponding to the findings of the research, Durukan (2006) stated that one of the three primary functions of the school vision is to encourage participation in decision-making that will assure the school's development. The fact that school principals share the vision is another conclusion drawn from this topic. According to Durukan (2006) visionary leaders can effectively institutionalize their vision and convey it to all levels of their organization. Considering the view of Durukan, vision is a contract of persuasion. A successful principal is able to unify the teachers behind a shared vision of education. The leadership behaviors observed in several research to boost the academic emphasis of schools are characterized by Leithwood et al. (2010) as (*i*) creating and conveying common goals and (*ii*) assisting in the clarification of common goals for academic success. The research also revealed that some school principals place students at the forefront of the strategic plan and vision determination process by analyzing the needs and current situation. Mulford (2007) found, in support of the research findings, that successful school principals determined vision and mission with a student-focused approach and a shared vision applying to the entire school. This research also revealed that certain school principals made an effort to set achievable goals when formulating strategic plans and visions. The vision, according to Durukan (2006) is the setting of achievable goals for the future. As a consequence, the research's findings might be seen as evidence in favor of Durukan's concept of vision.

Within the parameters of the study, it was determined that primary school principals used a democratic and participatory approach to decision-making, encouraged the sharing of ideas, and made

decisions after discussing with the parties in question. Göksoy (2014) came to the conclusion that school principals include teachers in decisions concerning practices while supporting this conclusion. Similarly, Babaoglan, and Yılmaz (2012) discovered that, based on the opinions of both teachers and school principals, the majority of teachers agreed with the decisions taken at the school. Against the findings of this study, Gülcan (2011) stated that school decisions were made solely by school principals, that teachers' desires to take part in decision-making were not completely realized, and that there was no common decision-making culture in school management. Similarly to this, Tabak, Şahin, and Yavuz Tabak (2020) came to the conclusion in their research that school administrators often stick to the limitations established by the regulations and do not go above and beyond the law or regulation in decision-making.

Another finding from the study is that primary school principals work hard to establish and preserve a robust culture that encourages cooperation in school. Additionally, some school principals said that they worked to establish a positive and supportive learning atmosphere by developing values and rituals that were unique to their school. Nonetheless, it can be said that they strive to create a school environment that emphasizes learning through a variety of projects and activities. Examining the pertinent literature, it is emphasized that school principals' leadership behaviors, such as promoting schoolwide cooperation and fostering a positive, supportive, and learning-focused school environment, are consistent with the research findings. (Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, 2008; Leithwood et al., 2010; Özdemir & Kavak, 2020; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Walker (2010) asserted that school principals play a crucial role in developing meaningful, interconnected, and learning-focused school environments. On the other hand, Garvin et al. (2008) highlighted the supportive role of school principals in establishing a positive learning environment at school. Ozdemir, and Kavak (2020) highlighted the behaviors of providing a positive and supportive climate and establishing a secure and organized setting as a part of the school principal's duties and responsibilities for enhancing student success. According to Leithwood et al. (2010), the effect of school leaders on student learning is indirect because they affect the school conditions. In this regard, they emphasized leadership behaviors such as being open, helpful, and truthful in terms of school-level aspects and establishing an organized setting. On the other hand, Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) discovered in their meta-analysis research that the potential influence of school leaders' practices of creating a regular and supportive atmosphere on the academic and non-academic results of students was significant.

Another leadership behavior of school principals mentioned in this study was encouraging and supporting teachers' professional development. In the context of this result, school principals said that they offer support for the professional development of teachers in a variety of ways. These involve initiating seminars, promoting graduate education, setting an example, cooperating academically with institutions, and supporting the teacher. Examining the relevant literature, findings reveal that the behaviors of teachers that encourage and promote professional development are among the fundamental leadership behaviors of school leaders which are in line with the study results. In their study, Leithwood et al. (2004) classified the fundamental core practices for successful leadership in various national cultures. According to this study, nurturing people, providing intellectual stimulation, and offering individual support are successful leadership behaviors. Similarly to this, Ozdemir, and Kavak (2020) pointed out supporting teachers' professional growth as one of the duties and responsibilities of school principals. Walker (2010) said that in order to develop a sustainable learning environment, school leaders should be role model, observe and establish dialogues. Balyer (2013)

discovered that school leaders' behaviors toward serving as role models for teachers, supporting teachers' professional development, placing an emphasis on teaching and learning, and fostering relationships and cooperation among teachers all had a positive effect on the achievement of students. Jantzi, and Leithwood (1996) identified being an appropriate model, giving tailored support, and encouraging intellectual growth as crucial leadership behaviors to corroborate the study results.

Relationships with parents and the external environment are another instance of leadership behavior among primary school principals in the study. In this scenario, it has been determined that primary school principals endeavor to communicate effectively with parents and the environment and to take advantage of external opportunities to enhance school conditions. The research findings confirm the literature that emphasizes the primary impact of school administrators on parent-school relationships. Leithwood et al. (2010) highlighted that the family is the most important factor in determining student success and stated what school administrators must do to increase parental involvement and impact on student learning as follows: (*i*) inviting personal and private family participation as opposed to general events, taking advantage from the support and skills of families in activities where families are going to take part, and (*ii*) offering chances for families to interact with others about school issues, *(iii)* devising classroom activities by creating special initiatives that involve families and make use of their unique skills. (*iv*) communicating effectively with families, for illustration, to plan family meetings that will be more significant for families, creating a special environment to make the family-teacher relationship effective, to consult the family on fundamental issues associated with children's education including solving mutual problems of families, and (*v*) establishing a network between teachers and families and assigning a person as correspondent. Bozkurt, Bayar, and Üstün (2018) stated that parents have an important role in achieving the goals of the school. They underlined the need of collaborating with families and the school to address children's issues and improve student learning. Additionally, they said that by using the leadership and entrepreneurial qualities of parents, it is possible to build stronger relationships with the environment, which is why school-family organizations were created. As underscored by a school principal within the purview of the research, it was determined that parent-teacher relations are more essential and primary than school principal-parent relations in the context of a primary school. Yet, within the parameters of the study, school principals mentioned the disadvantage of establishing relationships with non-governmental organizations and the issue of dissatisfied parents.

The research revealed that primary school principals exhibit a variety of leadership behaviors to improve student success. In this context, leadership behaviors such as providing a positive learning environment, organizing study times and practice exams, effectively guiding, monitoring, and evaluating students, and rewarding success have been noted. These results also support the relevant literature. Haiyan, Walker, and Xiaowei (2017) stated that school principals are responsible for creating a positive learning environment. Similarly, Aslan et al. (2009) asserted that schools can have a positive learning environment in the context of trust, respect, cooperation, and shared common objectives and values owing to the communication of the school principal and the teachers' collaboration. Besides, Leithwood et al. (2010) highlighted leadership behaviors such as overseeing teaching and learning processes, providing feedback, and protecting instructional time in order to enhance student learning and increase academic pressures in schools. In addition, Bulach, Lunenburg, and Potter (2011) reported that school administrators strive to foster an encouraging or gratifying environment in an effort to improve student achievement.

Recommendations

Various recommendations can be made based on the findings of the research. On the whole, school principals employ a participatory and democratic approach to determining the school's strategic plan and vision and making important decisions. Given that these are the perspectives of school principals, they may be limited in terms of self-affirmation. School principals strive to create and maintain a strong culture of collaboration. However, it might be recommended that school principals encourage teachers in their teaching processes and construct numerous school-specific rituals and values in order to establish and maintain a positive, supportive, and learning-friendly school atmosphere. It is possible to recommend that principals of schools take on additional responsibilities, such as promoting and supporting the professional development of teachers, being role models for their teachers, and cultivating collaborative relationships with other schools and universities. Overall, school principals generally have a positive approach to parent relations and the external environment. Appropriate settings and activities may be planned to foster positive relationships between teachers and parents, especially as they are primarily in charge of the development of students at the primary school level.

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Contribution Rate of Researchers

Author 1: 45%

Author 2: 30%

Author 3: 25%

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There is no material or individual organic connection with the people or institutions involved in the research and there is no conflict of interest in the research.

Genişletilmiş Türkçe Özet

İlkokul Müdürlerinin Liderlik Davranışlarının İncelenmesi: Fenomenolojik Bir Çalışma

Giriş

Eğitim kurumlarında okul müdürü lider olarak görülür ve okul müdüründen insanlarla etkili bir şekilde çalışma, okula mesleki anlamda hizmet, okul ve çevresini eğitime hazırlama, eğitim programlarının geliştirilmesi gibi görevler beklenir (Aydın, 2000). Liderlik konusu, okul yönetimi üzerinde çokça durulan çalışma alanlarından biri olmuştur (Şişman, 2014). Liderlik, eğitim yönetimi alanına girdiğinden beri çeşitli boyutları ile araştırılmaktadır. Örneğin araştırmalarda, iş performansı (Kuoppala, Lamminpaa, Liira, ve Vainio, 2008), iş doyumu (Stander ve Rothmann, 2008; Taş ve Önder 2010; Yılmaz ve Boğa Ceylan, 2011), bağlılık (Ding, Lu, Song ve Lu, 2012; Soba, Akman, ve Eroğlu, 2018), kültür (Arif, Zainudin, ve Hamid, 2019; Çelikten, 2006), iklim (Allen, Grigsby, ve Peters, 2015; Erdoğdu ve Umurkan, 2014; Griffith, 1999) ve güven (Ertürk, 2019; Joseph ve Winston, 2004; Terzi, Gocen, ve Kaya, 2020) gibi örgütsel faktörler ile ilişkisi araştırılmıştır. Bu araştırma alanlarının yanı sıra ilgili alanyazında okul liderliği ile öğrenci başarısı arasındaki çalışmalar önemli bir yer tutmaktadır (Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides, 1990; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Özdemir & Kavak, 2020).

Okul yönetimi ile ilgili çalışmalar incelendiğinde, okul müdürlerinden rutin ve bürokratik işlerin yapılması dışında çeşitli beklentilerin olduğu görülmektedir. Alanyazında ağırlıklı olarak okul müdürlerinin başlıca liderlik davranışları, okullarının belirlenen amaçlarını yerine getirmek, öğrenci başarısı için öğretmenleri ve aileyi geliştirmeye yönelik eylemlerde bulunmak, okulun etkililiğini artırmak için çaba sarf etmek olarak belirlenmiştir (Bursalıoğlu, 2000; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Şişman, 2014). Akbaba Altun ve Çakan'a (2008) göre, başarılı okullarda işbirliği, okuldaki eğitime verilen destek, öğretmenlerin niteliği, okulun fiziki altyapısını iyileştirme, okulda teknoloji kullanımını gibi özellikler olmalıdır ve bu özelliklerin gerçekleşmesi okul müdürünün sorumluluğundadır. Özetlemek gerekirse, okul müdürlerinin öğrenci başarısına odaklanma, başarı odaklı okul kültürü

oluşturma, öğretmenlere rehberlik etme ve okulun çevresi ile etkili iletişim sağlama gibi çeşitli liderlik davranışlarına vurgu yapılmaktadır.

Öğrenci başarısı ve okul müdürünün liderlik davranışları arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen birçok araştırma bulunmaktadır. Bu araştırmalar, okul müdürünün liderlik davranışları ile öğrenci başarısı arasında doğrudan veya dolaylı etkiler olduğu yönündedir. Özdemir ve Kavak'a göre (2020), okul müdürünün liderliği ile öğrenci başarısı arasında karmaşık bir ilişki vardır ve başarı üzerine etkinin küçük ama anlamlı olduğu üzerinedir. Her ne kadar küçük ve anlamlı bir fark olduğu vurgulanmış olsa da okullar arası başarı farklılıklarının azaltılmasında okul müdürlerine önemli roller düştüğü aşikardır (Babaoğlan vd., 2017). Çalışmalarda ortaya çıkan değişkenleri etkilemesi yönüyle okul müdürünün öğrenci başarısındaki etkisi kaçınılmazdır. Okul müdürünün bu tür değişkenleri etkilemesi dolaylı bir etki yaratacak gibi görünse de, diğer etkenler de göz önüne alındığında etkinin daha büyük olacağı düşünülmektedir. Okul müdürünün sorumluluk ve görevlerden bir diğeri ise, okulda iletişime açık ve işbirlikçi bir öğrenme ortamı oluşturmaktır. Özetle okul müdürünün özellikleri ve benimsediği liderlik davranışları etkili bir okul oluşturmak ve öğrenci başarısını artırmak için anahtar kavramdır (Gümüş, Bellibaş, Şen, & Hallinger, 2021; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hou, Cui, & Zhang, 2019; Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, & Brown, 2014). Okul müdürünün okul çıktılarını dolaylı ve doğrudan etkilemesi ışığında bu çalışmanın odağında, ilkokullarda görev yapan okul müdürlerinin liderlik davranışlarını incelemek yer almaktadır. Bu çalışmada, büyük oranda öğretmen görüşlerine göre incelenen okul müdürlerinin liderlik davranışlarını (Kars ve İnandı, 2018; Lindahl, 2010; Tahaoğlu ve Gedikoğlu, 2009) okul müdürlerinin görüş ve düşüncelerine göre araştırmak amaçlanmaktadır. Okul müdürlerinin görüşlerine göre, liderlik davranışlarının içeriğini ve kapsamını belirlemek onların okuldaki rol, görev ve sorumlulukları hakkındaki kişisel algısının öğrenilmesine katkı sağlayacaktır. Ek olarak, bu çalışma aracılığıyla ilkokul müdürlerinin liderlik davranışlarının odağında neyin yer aldığı, liderlik davranışlarını hangi alanlarda tanımladıkları üzerine bilgi edinilmesi mümkün olacaktır. Bu bilgiler ışığında çalışmanın temel amacı, ilkokullarda görev yapan okul müdürlerinin liderlik davranışlarına yönelik görüş ve deneyimlerini açığa çıkarmaktır.

Yöntem

Bu çalışma, olgubilim deseninde kurgulanan nitel bir araştırmadır. İlkokul müdürlerinin benimsedikleri liderlik davranışlarına ilişkin görüşlerini, algılarını ve deneyimlerini ortaya çıkarmak için olgubilim deseni tercih edilmiştir.

Katılımcılar

Bu araştırmada katılımcılar, amaçlı örnekleme yöntemine göre belirlenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden biri olan ölçüt örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. İlkokullarda en az 5 yıl okul yöneticiliği yapmış olmak ölçüt olarak belirlenmiştir. Bu ölçütün belirlenmesindeki temel amaç, ilkokullarda yönetimsel deneyim kazanabilecek süre kadar yönetici özelliği gösteren katılımcılara erişmektir. Araştırmanın katılımcılarını, Ankara ilinde ilkokullarda görev yapan yedi okul müdürü oluşturmaktadır. Bulguların sunumuna akıcılık kazandırmak ve gizliliği sağlamak için her bir katılımcıya isim kodları verilmiştir. Araştırmada yer alan katılımcıların tamamı ilkokullarda okul müdürü olarak görev yapmaktadır. Ek olarak katılımcıların tamamı erkektir (n=7). Katılımcıların okul yöneticiliği kıdemi 6 ila 37 yıl arasında değişmektedir. Son olarak katılımcıların eğitim durumu açısından lisansüstü eğitim yapan bir okul müdürü hariç tamamı lisans mezunudur.

Verilerin Toplanması

Verilerin toplanmasında araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen açık uçlu sorulardan oluşan ve sondalarla desteklenmiş yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Görüşme formu, yedi açık uçlu sorudan meydana gelmiştir. Araştırma verileri, katılımcılarla yüz yüze görüşme şeklinde toplanmıştır. Görüşmeler, belirlenen tarih ve saatte ilgili okulda gerçekleştirilmiştir. Katılımcıların izniyle görüşmelerin hepsinde ses kayıt cihazı kullanılmıştır. Görüşmeler ±50 dakika sürmüş olup okul müdürleriyle görüşmelerin tamamı bir hafta içinde tamamlanmıştır.

Verilerin Analizi

Araştırma verilerinin analizi öncesinde, ses kayıt cihazında kaydedilen görüşmeler kelimesi kelimesine deşifre edilmiştir. Araştırma verileri, araştırmacılar tarafından detaylı olarak okunmuştur. Araştırma verileri, hem içerik analizi hem de betimsel analiz tekniğiyle analiz edilmiştir. Bu doğrultuda araştırmacılar her bir katılımcıya ilişkin görüşme deşifrelerini okuyarak verilerden çeşitli kodlar üretmişlerdir. Bu kodlama sürecinin sonunda ilk kod listesi oluşturulmuştur. İkinci olarak, ulaşılan kodların literatürle uyumluluğu incelenmiştir. Bu sürecin sonunda, kodların literatürle uyumluluğu doğrulanmış ve kodlar literatüre uyumlu bir şekilde çeşitli temalarda birleştirilmiştir.

Geçerlik ve Güvenirlik

Araştırma sürecinin geçerliğini ve güvenirliğini sağlamak için çeşitli stratejiler kullanılmıştır. İlk olarak, araştırma süreci kapsamlı bir şekilde planlanmıştır. İkinci olarak ayrıntılı betimleme stratejisi kullanılmıştır. Bu bağlamda, bulguların sunumunda katılımcı görüşlerinin detaylı olarak yansıtılmasına gayret edilmiştir. Bir diğer strateji olarak uzman incelemesine başvurulmuştur. Araştırma kapsamında, Eğitim Yönetimi ve nitel araştırma yöntemleri konusunda uzman bir akademisyenden makaleyi incelemesi istenmiştir. Son olarak araştırmada katılımcıların konuya ilişkin gerçek yorumlarını ortaya çıkarmak için sonda sorular kullanılmıştır. Bu doğrultuda araştırmada, farklı türde sonda sorular kullanılmış olup katılımcıların konuyla ilgili gerçek görüşleri alınmaya çalışılmıştır.

Bulgular

Bu bölümde, araştırma sonucunda ulaşılan bulgular ve bazı katılımcıların görüşleri sunulmuştur.

Liderlik Davranışlarının Anlamına İlişkin Görüşler

Araştırmada "liderlik davranışları" kavramı ilkokul müdürlerinde çeşitli çağrışımlar uyandırmıştır. Bu çağrışımlar arasında öğretime odaklanma ve etkili iletişim kurma ön planda yer almıştır. Mehmet Müdür, öğretimi liderlik davranışının merkezine koyduğunu belirtmiştir. Bununla birlikte etkili iletişim kurma açısından okul müdürleri iletişim tekniklerini iyi kullanma, uyumlu çalışabilme, çalışanlarla iyi ilişkiler geliştirme ve olumlu bir okul iklimi oluşturma konularına değinmişlerdir. Ek olarak okul müdürleri liderlik davranışlarını adaleti sağlama, vizyoner bakış açısı sunma, sorumluluk alma ve harekete geçme açısından tanımlamışlardır. Bu görüşlerin yanı sıra bazı okul müdürleri, liderlik davranışları açısından okul liderlerinin donanımlı ve birikimli olması, çalışanlarda coşku ve heyecan uyandırması, iş ve işlemlerde koordinasyonu sağlaması, tutarlı ve kararlı davranışlar sergilemesi gerektiğini belirtmiştir. Bir okul müdürü (Ahmet) sorunlara akılcı ve uzlaştırıcı çözümler getirerek problem çözmenin önemli bir liderlik davranışı olduğunu ifade etmiştir. Son olarak bu görüşlerin aksine Ali, okul yöneticilerinin mülakat sistemi ile atandığı bir ortamda liderlik

davranışlarından bahsetmenin çok anlamlı olmadığını söylemiştir. Dahası eğitim sisteminin hiyerarşik bir emir-komuta zincirine sahip olduğunu, tepenin emirlerine uymak ve yapılması gerekeni yapmak zorunda olduklarını dolayısıyla bu kültürün egemen olduğu bir eğitim sisteminden lider çıkmasının çok güç olduğunu vurgulamıştır.

Stratejik Plan ve Vizyon Belirleme Sürecine İlişkin Görüşler

Araştırmada ilkokul müdürlerinin stratejik plan ve vizyon belirleme süreci hakkındaki görüşleri istenmiştir. Okul müdürleri bu süreçlerin odağında katılımcı ve demokratik bir ortam sağlama görüşünde hemfikirdir. Bu doğrultuda okul müdürlerinin neredeyse tamamı, stratejik plan ve vizyon belirleme sürecinin yanı sıra birçok konuda öğretmenlerin ve tüm paydaşların okul karar mekanizmalarına katılımını sağladıklarını belirtmiştir. Bu bulgunun yanı sıra okul müdürlerinin büyük çoğunluğu vizyon belirleme sürecinin önemli bir aşamasının vizyonu paylaşma olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Bu bağlamda Mehmet, birlikte hareket etmenin önemine değinerek yılda birçok kez okulun vizyonu ve misyonunu okulun paydaşlarına paylaşmak için çeşitli toplantılar, organizasyonlar düzenlediklerini ifade etmiştir. Bununla birlikte bazı okul müdürleri stratejik plan ve vizyon belirlerken ihtiyacı ve mevcut durumu analiz etmenin önemine değinmişlerdir. Bu tema altında ayrıca okul müdürleri; öğrenciyi merkeze koyma, ulaşılabilir hedefler belirleme, çekirdek kadroda ön çalışma yapma ve en iyi stratejileri belirleme çabası gibi görüşler de öne sürmüşlerdir. Buna göre bazı okul müdürleri stratejik plan belirleme sürecinde öğrenciyi odağa aldıklarını, ulaşılabilir hedefler belirmeye gayret ettiklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca bir okul müdürü (Ali) vizyon ve misyon geliştirme açısından genellikle çekirdek kadrosuyla ön çalışma yaptığını, daha sonra öğretmenlerle görüştüklerini ifade etmiştir.

Okulda Karar Alma Süreçlerine İlişkin Görüşler

Araştırmada ilkokul müdürlerinin okulda karar alma süreçleri hakkındaki görüşleri istenmiştir. Okul müdürleri genel itibarıyla çoğulcu bir anlayışla demokratik bir ortamda katılımcı karar alma süreçlerini uyguladıklarını belirtmiştir. Okul müdürleri öğretmenlerle birlikte karar aldıklarını (Mehmet), karar sürecinin olgunlaşma aşamasında oylama yaptıklarını (Mustafa) ve öğretmenleri bu sürece dâhil ederek kararın uygulanabilirliğini garantiye aldıklarını (İbrahim) ifade etmişlerdir. Bu tema altında vurgulanan bir diğer nokta özgürce fikir beyan etme ve fikir alışverişi konularıdır. Bazı okul müdürleri her öğretmenin fikirlerini özgürce ifade etmelerine olanak sağlayan bir ortam oluşturmaya çalıştıklarını belirtmiştir. Bu bağlamda çalışanların rahat bir ortamda görüş ve önerilerini sunma imkânına sahip olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Bu bulguların yanı sıra Hasan alınacak karar daha özel durumlar için geçerli ise, sadece durumu ilgilendirecek kişilerle paylaşımlarda bulunduğunu ifade etmiştir. Hüseyin ise, okulun eğitim amaçlarına dayalı olarak kararların şekillendiğinin altını çizmiştir. Son olarak Ali, karar alırken öncelikle çekirdek kadrosunda ön çalışma yaptığını ifade etmiştir.

Okul Ortamına İlişkin Görüşler

Araştırmada ilkokul müdürlerinin okul ortamı hakkındaki görüşleri istenmiştir. Buna göre okul müdürlerinin çoğunluğu güçlü iş birliği kültürü oluşturma ve sürdürme noktasında gayret gösterdiğini ifade etmiştir. Bu bulguya benzer şekilde Mustafa, öğretmenler arasındaki iş birliğini geliştirmenin ve sürdürmenin önemine değinmiştir. Ek olarak bu iş birliği ortamının öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimlerini desteklediğini belirtmiştir. Diğer taraftan bazı okul müdürleri, okula özgü değerler ve ritüeller geliştirme konusuna değinmiştir. İbrahim müdür, her okulun kendine has bir kimliği olduğunu vurgulayarak okulda yapılan bütün çalışmaların bu unsurlardan etkilendiğini belirtmiştir. Okulu bir

yaşam alanı olarak değerlendiren Hüseyin, eğitim ve öğretimin niteliğinin artırılmasında donanımlı, entelektüel düzeyi yüksek, sorumluluk alma becerisi gelişmiş, sosyal yaşamında verimli, değişime ve gelişime açık öğretmenlerin varlığının oldukça önemli olduğunu belirtmiştir. Bu açıdan öğretmenleri destekleyici bir yaklaşım sergilediklerini vurgulamıştır. Son olarak Hasan, Avrupa Birliği projeleri, Bakanlık projeleri ve okula özgü bazı etkinlik ve projeler aracılığıyla öğrenmeyi merkeze alan olumlu okul ortamı oluşturmaya çalıştıklarını dile getirmiştir.

Öğretmenlerin Mesleki Gelişim Çalışmalarına Etkisine İlişkin Görüşler

Araştırmada ilkokul müdürlerinden öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişim çalışmalarına etkilerine ilişkin görüşleri istenmiştir. Bu konu hakkında okul müdürleri çeşitli görüşler öne sürmüştür. Bu bağlamda lisansüstü eğitimi teşvik etme, seminer çalışmaları düzenleme ve rol model olma görüşleri ön planda yer almıştır. Bu bağlamda Ahmet, öğretmenlerin lisansüstü eğitim çalışmalarına katılmalarını arzu ettiğini ve önerdiğini ifade etmiştir. Benzer şekilde Ali okulda öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimi için seminer çalışmaları yapmaya gayret ettiğini belirtmiştir. Bununla birlikte Hasan, bakanlığın hizmet içi eğitim faaliyetlerinin sınırlı olduğunu belirterek bu açığı üniversiteler ile akademik iş birliği kurarak ve onlardan estek alarak çözmeye çalıştıklarını vurgulamıştır. Bu görüşlerin yanı sıra öğretmenleri çalışmaya ve gelişmeye özendirmek adına en başta okul yönetimi olarak rol model olmaya çabaladıklarını ifade etmiştir.

Veli ve Çevre ile İlişkiler Hakkındaki Görüşler

Araştırmada ilkokul müdürlerinin veli ve çevre ile ilişkileri hakkındaki görüşleri istenmiştir. Okul müdürlerinin büyük çoğunluğu veli ve çevreyle ilişkileri önemsediklerini ve bu ilişkileri geliştirmek için çaba sarf ettiklerini belirtmiştir. Bu bağlamda okul müdürleri gerek veli gerekse sivil toplum kuruluşları ve kamu kuruluşlarıyla olumlu ilişkiler sürdürmeyi istediklerini vurgulamışlardır. Bu açıdan Ali ilkokul özelinde veli desteği alabilmek için onlarla iyi bir ilişki sürdürmenin gerekliliğine vurgu yapmıştır. Mustafa Müdür, velilerle ilişkilerde empatik bir yaklaşım benimsediğini ifade ederken; Hüseyin Müdür ise düzenli veli toplantıları yaparak eksiklerini gördüklerini ve dayanışmayı artırdıklarını belirtmiştir (Hüseyin). Bu tema kapsamında vurgulanan bir diğer önemli nokta, okul şartlarının iyileştirilmesi için çevre olanaklarından yararlanma şeklinde ifade edilebilir. Okul müdürleri, okulun bazı donanım veya tadilat ihtiyaçlarını çevre olanakları aracılığıyla giderdiklerini söylemişlerdir. Bu kapsamda Hasan, özellikle sivil toplum kuruluşları aracılığıyla okula katkı sağladıklarını dile getirmiştir. Son olarak bazı okul müdürleri bu tema kapsamında bazı olumsuz durumlara vurgu yapmışlardır. Mehmet, sivil toplum kuruluşlarıyla ilişki kurmadığına; Hasan ise ilkokul velilerinin gereksiz şikâyet ve taleplerde bulunduklarına değinmiştir.

Öğrenci Başarısını Artırma Çalışmalarına İlişkin Görüşler

Araştırmada ilkokul müdürlerinin okulda öğrenci başarısını artırma çalışmalarına ilişkin görüşleri istenmiştir. Bu konu hakkında okul müdürleri çeşitli görüşler öne sürmüştür. Bazı okul müdürleri öğrencilerin başarılarını artırmak için motive edici olumlu bir öğrenme ortamı sağlamaya çalıştıklarını belirtmiştir. Bununla birlikte bazı okul müdürleri, sınıf seviyesini yakalayamayan öğrenciler için etüt çalışmaları ve öğrencilerin başarısını ölçmek ve buna yönelik stratejiler belirlemek için deneme sınavları yapıldığını ifade etmiştir. Bu bulguların yanı sıra bazı okul müdürleri öğrencilerin yetenek durumuna göre çeşitli yönlendirme girişimlerinde bulunduklarını, bu anlamda rehberlik hizmetlerinin aktif olarak çalıştığını belirtmiştir. Bu tema kapsamında ulaşılan bir diğer bulgu, öğrenci

başarısını izleme ve değerlendirme olarak ifade edilebilir. Ali, belirli aralıklarla öğrencilerin başarılarını ölçtüklerini ve bu ölçümleri kapsamlı olarak değerlendirdiklerini dile getirmiştir. Bu bulguların yanı sıra bir okul müdürü (Mustafa), öğrencilerin sportif ve akademik başarıları sonucunda öğrencilere çeşitli ödüller verdiklerini, onları onurlandırdıklarını vurgulamıştır. Son olarak bir okul müdürü ise, öğretimi geliştirmeye destek olarak materyal geliştirme ve yaygınlaştırma, öğretim yöntem ve metodlarının zenginleştirilmesine destek olduklarını ifade etmiştir.

Tartışma ve Sonuç

Bu çalışmada, ilkokullarda görev yapan okul müdürlerinin liderlik davranışlarına yönelik görüş ve deneyimlerini açığa çıkarmak amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda olgubilim deseni kurgulanmış ve yedi okul müdürüyle görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veri analizleri sonucunda (*i*) liderlik davranışları kavramının anlamı, (*ii*) stratejik plan ve vizyon belirleme süreci, (*iii*) okulda karar alma süreci, (*iv*) okul ortamı, (*v*) öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişim çalışmalarına etki, (*vi*) veli ve çevreyle ilişkiler ve (*vii*) öğrenci başarısını artırma çalışmaları şeklinde ana bulgulara ulaşılmıştır.

İlkokul müdürleri, liderlik davranışları kavramına yönelik çeşitli anlamlar yüklemişlerdir. Katılımcıların okul liderliği davranışlarını açıklamada genellikle olumlu anlamlar kullandıkları göze çarpmaktadır. Bunlar arasında öğretime odaklanma ve etkili iletişim kurma anlamları vurgulanmıştır. Bu bağlamda öğretim etkinliklerini önceliklemede, öğrenci öğrenmesini odağa alma, öğrenmeye bağlılık ile iyi iletişim kurma, uyumlu çalışabilme ve çalışanlarla iyi ilişkiler geliştirme gibi liderlik davranışlarına değinilmiştir. Araştırma bulguları, genel olarak ilgili alanyazın ile uyumludur (Alig Mielcarek, 2003; Day & Leithwood, 2007). Araştırma kapsamında ayrıca liderlik davranışları açısından donanımlı ve birikimli olma, çalışanlarda coşku ve heyecan uyandırma, iş ve işlemlerde koordinasyonu sağlama, tutarlı ve kararlı davranışlar sergileme ve problem çözme gibi anlamlara da ulaşılmıştır. Bu bulguya benzer şekilde Babaoğlan vd. (2017) çalışmalarında, okul müdürünün eşitliğe ve adalete önem vermesi, öğretmenleriyle iyi ilişkiler kurması, tutarlı ve istikrarlı olması, sorumluluk alması, anlayışlı olması ve empati kurması gerektiğini vurgulamışlardır. Bu tema kapsamında son olarak bir katılımcı tarafından okul yöneticilerinin mülakat sistemi ile atandığı bir ortamda liderlik davranışlarından bahsetmenin çok anlamlı olmadığı belirtilmiştir.

Araştırmada ilkokul müdürlerinin stratejik plan ve vizyon belirleme sürecinde katılımcı ve demokratik bir ortam sağladıkları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Okul liderliğinin etkilerini derleyen Hallinger ve Heck (1998) bu çalışmalarda birincil bir etki alanı olarak özellikle okul müdürünün vizyon, misyon ve hedeflerle okulun yönünü şekillendirmedeki rolüne vurgu yapmışlardır. Dahası bu çalışmada başarılı liderliğin öğrenci başarısını nasıl etkilediğine dair kanıtların incelenmesi sonucunda okul düzeyinde, "demokratik bir ortamda okul vizyon ve misyonun belirlenmesi, karar vermeye öğretmenlerin katılımı" gibi konular ön plana çıkmıştır. Araştırma bulgularıyla örtüşür şekilde Durukan (2006) ise, karara katılımla okulun gelişimini sağlayacak kararların alınmasını teşvik etmeyi okul vizyonunun üç temel işlevinden biri olarak ifade etmiştir. Bu tema kapsamında ulaşılan bir diğer sonuç, okul müdürlerinin vizyonu paylaştığı yönündedir. Araştırmada ulaşılan bir diğer sonuç, bazı okul müdürlerinin stratejik plan ve vizyon belirleme sürecinde ihtiyacı ve mevcut durumu analiz ettikleri ve öğrenciyi merkeze aldıkları şeklindedir. Araştırma bulgularını destekler nitelikte Mulford (2007) çalışmasında, başarılı okul liderlerinin öğrenci odaklı bir yaklaşımla vizyon ve misyon belirlediği ve okul boyunca vizyonu paylaştığı bulgularına ulaşmıştır. Bununla birlikte araştırmada bazı okul müdürlerinin stratejik plan ve vizyon belirlerken ulaşılabilir hedefler belirlemeye gayret ettiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Araştırma kapsamında ilkokul müdürlerinin karar alma sürecinde katılımcı ve demokratik bir yaklaşım benimsediği, fikir alış verişini desteklediği ve ilgili kişilere danışarak kararların alındığı gibi sonuçlara ulaşılmıştır. Bu bulguyu destekler nitelikte Göksoy (2014) araştırmasında okul müdürlerinin uygulamalar ile ilgili kararlara öğretmenleri dâhil ettiği sonucuna ulaşmıştır. Araştırma bulgularının aksine Gülcan (2011) araştırmasında, okullarda alınan kararların sadece okul müdürleri tarafından alındığı, öğretmenlerin kararlara katılım konusundaki arzularının tam olarak karşılanmadığı ve okul yönetiminde ortak karar alma kültürünün olmadığı sonucuna ulaşmıştır.

Araştırmada ulaşılan bir diğer sonuç, ilkokul müdürlerinin okulda güçlü bir iş birliği kültürü oluşturma ve sürdürme yönünde çaba gösterdikleridir. Ek olarak bazı okul müdürleri okula özgü değerler ve ritüeller geliştirdiklerini ve olumlu ve destekleyici bir okul ortamı oluşturma yönünde girişimlerde bulunduklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Bununla birlikte çeşitli proje ve etkinlikler aracılığıyla öğrenmeyi merkeze alan olumlu okul ortamı oluşturmaya çalıştıkları söylenebilir. İlgili alanyazın incelendiğinde, araştırma bulgularını destekler nitelikte okul müdürlerinin okulda iş birliği sağlama, olumlu, destekleyici ve öğrenmeyi merkeze alan bir okul ortamı oluşturma ve sürdürme şeklindeki liderlik davranışlarına vurgu yapılmaktadır (Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, 2008; Leithwood vd., 2010; Özdemir, & Kavak, 2020; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008).

Araştırma kapsamında okul müdürlerinin bir diğer liderlik davranışı, öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişim çalışmalarını teşvik etme ve destekleme olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu bulgu kapsamında okul müdürleri çeşitli yollarla öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimlerini desteklediklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Bu yollar arasında lisansüstü eğitimi teşvik etme, seminer çalışmaları düzenleme, rol model olma, üniversiteler ile akademik iş birliği kurma ve öğretmeni destekleme gösterilebilir. İlgili alanyazın incelendiğinde, araştırma bulgularıyla benzer şekilde okul liderlerinin temel liderlik davranışları arasında öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişim çalışmalarını teşvik etme ve destekleme davranışları yer almaktadır. Leithwood ve diğerleri (2004) araştırmalarında farklı ulusal kültürlerde başarılı liderlik için temel çekirdek uygulamaları tasnif etmişlerdir. Bu araştırmaya göre insanları geliştirmek, entelektüel uyarım ve bireysel destek sağlamak başarılı liderlik davranışları arasında gösterilmiştir.

Araştırmada ilkokul müdürlerinin liderlik davranışı sergilediği bir diğer alan, veli ve çevreyle ilişkileridir. Bu bağlamda ilkokul müdürlerinin veli ve çevreyle etkili iletişim kurmaya ve okul şartlarını iyileştirmek için çevre olanaklarından yararlanmaya çaba gösterdikleri sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Araştırma bulguları, okul müdürlerinin veli ve çevreyle ilişkilerdeki birincil etkisini vurgulayan alanyazını desteklemektedir. Leithwood ve diğerleri (2010) özellikle öğrenci başarısını açıklayan en büyük etkenin aileye ait olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Araştırma kapsamında bir okul müdürünün vurguladığı üzere, ilkokul olma özelinde okul müdürü-veli ilişkilerinden ziyade veli-öğretmen ilişkilerinin daha önemli ve birincil olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bununla birlikte araştırma kapsamında okul müdürleri tarafından sivil toplum kuruluşlarıyla ilişki kurmanın dezavantajı ve memnun olmayan veli yapısına değinilmiştir.

Son olarak araştırmada ilkokul müdürlerinin öğrenci başarını artırmak için çeşitli liderlik davranışları sergiledikleri sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu kapsamda olumlu öğrenme ortamı sağlama, etüt ve deneme sınavları organize etme, öğrencileri etkili bir şekilde yönlendirme, izleme ve değerlendirme ve başarıyı ödüllendirme liderlik davranışlarına ulaşılmıştır. Araştırmada ulaşılan bu sonuçlar, ilgili literatürü destekler niteliktedir. Haiyan, Walker ve Xiaowei (2017) okul müdürlerinin olumlu öğrenme ortamı sağlama konusunda sorumlu olduğunu belirtmiştir. Buna ek olarak Leithwood ve diğerleri

(2010) öğrenci öğrenmesini geliştirmek ve okulların akademik baskılarını artırmak için öğretme ve öğrenme süreçlerini izleme ve geri bildirim sağlama ile öğretimsel zamanı koruma gibi liderlik davranışlarına vurgu yapmışlardır.

Öneriler

Araştırmada ulaşılan sonuçlar bağlamında çeşitli öneriler getirilebilir. Okul müdürlerinin okulun stratejik plan ve vizyon belirleme ile karar alma sürecinde genel itibarıyla katılımcı ve demokratik bir yaklaşım benimsediği söylenebilir. Bu görüşler, okul müdürlerinin görüşleri olduğu için kendini olumlama açısından bazı sınırlılıklar barındırabilir. Okul müdürlerinin, güçlü bir iş birliği kültürü oluşturma ve sürdürme yönünde çabası bulunmaktadır. Ancak olumlu, destekleyici ve öğrenmeye uygun bir okul ortamı oluşturmak ve sürdürmek için okul müdürlerinin öğretmenleri öğretim süreçlerinde desteklemesi, okula özgü çeşitli ritüeller ve değerler geliştirmesi önerilebilir. Okul müdürlerinin öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimlerini teşvik etme ve destekleme yönünde daha fazla sorumluluk alması, rol model olması ve diğer okullar ve üniversitelerle iş birlikleri geliştirmesi önerilebilir. Okul müdürleri, veli ve çevreyle ilişkiler konusunda genel itibarıyla olumlu bir yaklaşım içerisindedir. Özellikle ilkokul düzeyinde öğrenci gelişiminin birincil sorumlusu olarak öğretmen ve veli ilişkilerinin ve iş birliğinin geliştirilmesi için uygun ortamlar ve etkinlikler düzenlenebilir.